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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF
OUTER SPACE
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Twenty-eighth session
Working Group of the Whole

DRAFT REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE ON THE WORK OF ITS FIFTH SESSION

1. The Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) was re-established for its fifth session by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 45/72 of 11 December 1990, with a view to improving the execution of activities relating to international cooperation, particularly those included in the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and to proposing concrete steps to increase such cooperation as well as to make it more efficient. The Working Group held a series of meetings from 21 to 26 February 1991, during the twenty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. At its meeting on 26 February 1991, the Working Group adopted the present report.

2. Mr. Muhammad Nasim Shah (Pakistan) was elected Chairman of the Working Group. The Chairman, in his opening statement, reviewed the mandate of the Working Group for its fifth session and the status of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

3. In considering the item, the Working Group had before it the studies and reports prepared by the Secretariat, Member States and international organizations, as requested by the Working Group at its fourth session and endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 10 of resolution 45/72. The Working Group also had before it a working paper submitted by the Group of 77, contained in document A/AC.105/C.1/WG.6/L.5 and Corr.1.

4. The Working Group noted with satisfaction that efforts were being made by the United Nations, Member States and other relevant international organizations to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. Bearing in mind that many of the recommendations were yet to be implemented, the Working Group proposed that the following should be undertaken, keeping in view the priorities contained in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 45/72:

(a) The emphasis of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should remain on long-term, project-oriented on-the-job training in space technology itself as well as its specific application areas, in particular, new developments in satellite systems, software for remote sensing and use of digital processing systems and training for management of ground stations. In order to facilitate the development by the developing countries of their indigenous research and development capabilities, the number of trainees from each country should be sufficient to create a national core group of experts. The Working Group noted with appreciation the offers of fellowships made by some Member States and international organizations in that regard and urged other Member States and international organizations to make similar contributions. The Outer Space Affairs Division of the United Nations Secretariat should make every effort to arrange for the increase in the number of fellowships offered and to encourage full utilization of the fellowships. In that regard, the Outer Space Affairs Division should devote, as much as possible, the resources allocated to it for the implementation of the Programme on Space Applications.

(b) In the light of the continued development and evolution of space activities, the Committee should request all States, particularly those with major space or space-related capabilities, to continue to inform the Secretary-General annually, as appropriate, about those space activities that were or could be the subject of greater international cooperation, with particular emphasis on the needs of the developing countries, in order to permit a better assessment of the present and future of such international cooperation by the Working Group at its next session.

(c) Similarly, the Committee should also request international organizations with space related activities to continue to inform the Secretary-General annually concerning those space activities that were or could be the subject of greater international cooperation, with particular emphasis on the needs of the developing countries, in order to permit a better assessment of the present and future of such international cooperation by the Working Group at its next session.

(d) In order to promote better access to and experiences in higher education in space-related subjects, the United Nations should, upon request, continue to arrange for the provision of consultancy in the form of experts from the developed and developing countries in the preparation of an integrated national plan of action for initiating, strengthening or reorienting an appropriate space applications programme which should be in conformity with other national development programmes. Based on such requests, the Outer Space Affairs Division should maintain a periodically updated list of experts in space technology and applications, in consultation with Member States and their national space authorities, to facilitate the exchange of consultants at the international level.

(e) In formulating cooperative programmes and projects, intensive participation of international and regional financial and development institutions should be encouraged by the United Nations. In this connection, the Secretariat should continue to prepare annually a report on the arrangements it has made with other organs, bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and other regional/international organizations in order to utilize fully the available resources and to secure additional financial support from other sources for continued implementation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

(f) Extensive cooperation should be encouraged among countries within a region through sharing their human resources, technical expertise, hardware and software for the space-related projects. If a country or countries within a region find it beyond their resources to undertake a programme by themselves, the United Nations should, upon request, endeavour to coordinate with them towards establishing a regional programme addressing the needs of those countries.

(g) Encouragement should be given to non-governmental organizations which, by means of conferences, publications and other activities including the holding of symposia and meetings devoted to special topics, could help to integrate regional and interregional efforts in order to facilitate and coordinate the space activities of scientific organizations. The United Nations should strengthen its cooperation with them, as part of its commitment to assisting developing countries to attain the benefits of space technology including its spin-offs. Efforts should also be made by the United Nations to seek the cooperation of other international and regional bodies specialized in space activities.

(h) On the basis of the information provided by the States, the Division should prepare on a regular basis an updated report on the resources and technological capabilities of the States in the fields of space activities for the promotion of cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Similarly, the Division should periodically update the report on the capabilities of States in the areas of education, training, research and fellowship opportunities, for the promotion of cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

(i) Countries with relevant capabilities are once again encouraged to provide to the developing countries financial and technical assistance for developing low-cost community receivers for communication satellites and low-cost, preferably renewable, power sources to operate the systems in unelectrified locations.

(j) Given the investments already made on the ground by many countries in the form of ground stations, processing equipment, data banks, software, etc., for remote-sensing data reception/analysis, satellite-operating States are urged to ensure the availability of data on a continued basis and in a form compatible with the current systems.

(k) Taking into account paragraph 8 (c) of General Assembly resolution 45/72, the United Nations should continue to lead, with the active support of its specialized agencies and other international organizations, an international effort to establish regional centres for space science and technology education in existing national/regional educational institutions in the developing countries.

The Working Group noted with appreciation the working project documents that had been prepared in this regard by the Secretariat and that they were being brought to the attention of all Member States with an appeal for financial and material support for the establishment of these centres.

5. The Working Group took note, with appreciation, of the different reports prepared by the Secretariat regarding the status of the implementation of the various recommendations of UNISPACE 82. Bearing in mind that International Space Year will take place in 1992, coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the holding of the UNISPACE 82 Conference, the Working Group decided to make, at its next session, a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. The Working Group requests the Secretariat to prepare a background paper to assist the Working Group in this regard, taking into account previous reports already prepared by the Secretariat.

6. Noting that some of the space applications studies recommended by UNISPACE 82 were incomplete and some of them were limited in scope, the Working Group proposed that:

(a) In the case of priority studies recommended by UNISPACE 82, information from different reports should be integrated and new information should be compiled in order to provide Member States with comprehensive studies;

(b) Based upon the results obtained in implementation of subparagraph (a) above, a few specific studies should be carried out to demonstrate the potentials of space technology, which might include the following:

(i) Integrated land and water resources management for rural development;

(ii) Remote and rural area communications and broadcasting;

(iii) Forest resources management;

(iv) Desertification;

(v) Ocean resources development.

As a first step, information on some of those subjects might be provided as part of the United Nations efforts in conjunction with International Space Year. The Working Group noted with appreciation the studies prepared by the Secretariat on applications of space technology to flood monitoring and control (A/AC.105/472) and on upper atmosphere studies for weather and environment monitoring (A/AC.105/477).

7. The Working Group recommended that it be reconvened next year to continue its work.